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26

EASTERN EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCER

3 February 1968

25X1

Polish President May Step Down

Polish President Edward Ochab's near blindness may force his retirement this year, possibly even before the party congress scheduled for December [redacted]

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[redacted] Ochab's replacement will probably be Defense Minister Marian Spychalski who, in turn, will be replaced by his current deputy, Grzegorz Korczynski. Such a switch would be backed by Minister of Internal Affairs Mieczyslaw Moczar. It would also allow party boss Gomulka to appear loyal to his good friend Spychalski.

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Bulgarian Interest in Near East Crude Oil

Sofia has inquired [redacted] for the purchase of 150,000 tons of Mediterranean crude oil for immediate delivery [redacted]

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[redacted] Sofia's interest in Near East crude is new and implies that shortages exist in Bulgaria. [redacted]

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COMMENT: Interest in Near East oil goes back at least to the Shah of Iran's visit to Sofia in September 1966 when Bulgaria agreed in principle to buy several million tons of Iranian oil annually. In addition, Bulgarian Deputy Premier Avramov committed Bulgaria to the purchase of 100,000 tons of UAR crude and an unspecified amount of Syrian oil during his tour of the Near East last August.

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25X1

-2-

We have no indication of Bulgarian oil shortages, in fact, crude oil production in Bulgaria during 1967 increased by 95,000 tons, according to official Bulgarian statistics released on 29 January. Russia and Rumania have been the major Bulgarian suppliers of crude oil and possibly the Vietnam war has diverted their reserves at Bulgaria's expense, or an increase in commercial ventures with Near East countries may be a reflection of Sofia's new foreign trade policy which is designed to include more contacts with non-Communist countries.

#### Nationality Problems Flare in Yugoslavia

Croatian and Slovenian national sentiment has flared during the last two months. In defense of Croatian interests, Professor Zarko Vidovic of Zagreb University has attacked a top party spokesman on nationality affairs, Kiro Hadzivasilev, for having made "twisting comments" in a lecture at the university last November. The initial and subsequent polemics by Vidovic have been published in the influential literary journal, Knizevne Novine, which subsequently finds itself embroiled in a polemical struggle with Komunist and Borba, Yugoslavia's leading dailies.

COMMENT: Vidovic's polemics have delighted Croatian nationalist who recently suffered a setback in their campaign to gain recognition of the existence of a Croatian language separate and apart from a Serbian one. The current attack, however, has done little else than anger party leaders who now appear intent on muzzling Knizevne Novine by shaking up its editorial staff. The Slovenians, who are very much aware of the activity in Croatia, have chosen a resolution by a small group of professional linguists to emphasize that they also believe that the Slovene language has been accorded an inferior position in terms of languages in Yugoslavia.

25X6

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Next 1 Page(s) In Document Denied